

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
CASE MANAGEMENT

TANF CASH ASSISTANCE

Subject:
Parents as Scholars

Supersedes: **New to Manual**

References: 37.78.103, .807, 825 and 826; House Bill 555

GENERAL RULE: House Bill 555 created the Parents as Scholars Program (PAS), which provides that recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) be allowed to attend an approved educational program for the purpose of continuation of education leading toward a high school diploma, a general equivalency degree, an associate's degree, or a baccalaureate degree. Due to federal participation rate requirements, Parents as Scholars participation is limited. The number of slots available, if any, will be set and monitored by Central Office to maintain state participation rates. Slot availability may differ for single and two parent households due to federal participation rate requirements for each and the penalties that would result from not meeting them.

TANF policy limits participants to no more than 12 months of Short Term Training (STT) as a Family Investment Agreement/Employability Plan (FIA/EP) activity in their lifetime. **Prior to being approved for the PAS program, the 12 months of STT must be exhausted.** The twelve months will be utilized as part of a screening process for applicants for the Parents as Scholars program. The applicant will be required to complete an assessment as defined by rule. The number of slots for this activity may be limited.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The TANF recipient making application for a limited slot in the Parents as Scholars program must:

1. Meet all basic eligibility requirements for TANF, including income and resource criteria and cooperation with paternity and child support regulations. (See 103-3)
2. Qualify as a full-time student by being enrolled at least 12 credit hours each semester or 30 credit hours per year in an approved educational program.

NOTE: An approved educational program is defined as 'a program in a unit of the Montana university system as provided in 20-25-201, a community college, a tribal college, a private college, or any other accredited college in Montana in which an individual is enrolled in pursuit of an associate's or

baccalaureate degree or an accredited high school or training program approved by the department as rule.'

EXCEPTION: On-line post-secondary courses are countable toward the required credits as long as the credits are transferable in their entirety to the Montana university system. The number of credits per semester must be comparable to the number of credits that define a full-time post secondary student in Montana. The student must provide proof that the online college is accredited and credits are transferable to a unit of the Montana University system.

The approved TANF recipient student must:

1. Continue to meet all basic eligibility requirements for TANF.
2. Complete a 180-hour work activity requirement in each 12-month period of PAS eligibility. This may include work-study, internships, or paid employment.
3. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. PAS will match financial aid rules in regard to the GPA and academic probation issues. Verification of current GPA must be provided at the end of each semester and as well as verification of registration for classes for the next semester with a minimum of 12 credits.
4. Agree to relocate after graduation, if necessary, to seek employment in a job for which the education was intended.
5. Provide information that the selected field of education will promote economic self-sufficiency.
6. Work toward attainment of a degree not to exceed baccalaureate level or a degree for one vocational training program.
7. Maintain contact with the WoRC case manager and school counselor throughout the PAS participation period to ensure ongoing case management, compliance with the FIA/EP requirements and satisfactory progress in educational activities outlined in the individualized plan.
8. Provide to the case manager a long-term plan for earning the degree, if the limited number of TANF months left is less than the time needed to complete the degree.

**ASSIGNMENT
OF SLOTS**

Once a TANF recipient student is approved for the PAS program, the slot will be retained during the summer months and school breaks as long as the student continues to meet the PAS criteria. Failure to do so may result in termination of the student's approval to participate in PAS and the slot being assigned to another student.

If there is a waiting list, a decision will be made by Central Office regarding the next approved student on a case-by-case basis.

As each student graduates, the vacant slot will be assigned to another student, with consideration of the current participation rate.

SANCTION

Students in the PAS program can be sanctioned upon recommendation from the WoRC Case Manager. See TANF sanction policy 702-3. A student who is sanctioned the first time while in the PAS program will retain their slot if they renegotiate their FIA/EP before the end of the penalty month. A student who is sanctioned for the second or subsequent time will lose their PAS slot immediately.

**DEPENDENT
CARE**

Dependent daycare will be provided for the hours of school attendance and travel time to and from the childcare provider, with the exception of a \$10.00 co-payment, which is the obligation of the student.

TIMECLOCK

Approval for PAS does not extend the Federal or State 60 month timeclock. PAS recipients must meet extended benefit criteria, such as domestic violence, to receive benefits past 60 months.

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